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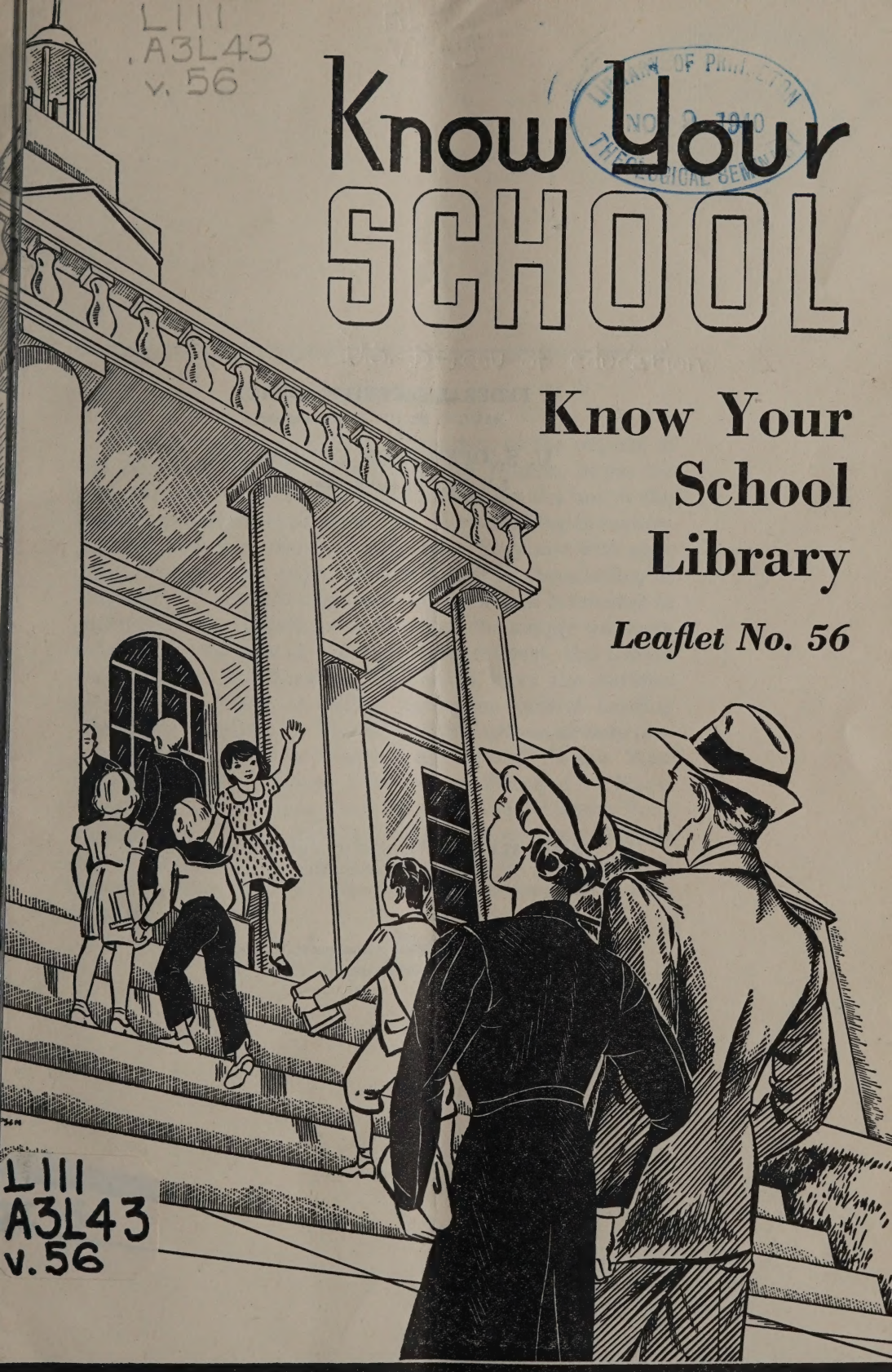
Know Your SCHOOL



Know Your School Library

Leaflet No. 56

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Federal Security Agency • U. S. Office of Education

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOREWORD

The United States Office of Education, at the request of the American Association of University Women, began the preparation of a series of study outlines for the use of the local branches of that organization. Four outlines in mimeographed form were issued at intervals. They met with such good response not only by the American Association of University Women but by other organizations interested in studying the public-school system that the supply was soon exhausted. In view of the continuing interest, the United States Office of Education decided to have the outlines printed as a series of leaflets under the general heading "Know Your School." The titles of the outlines already prepared are "Know Your Board of Education," "Know Your Superintendent," "Know Your School Principal," "Know Your Teacher," "Know Your School Child," "Know Your Modern Elementary School," "Know How Your Schools are Financed," and "Know Your State Educational Program." Other outlines in the series will be issued from time to time.

BESS GOODYKOONTZ,
Assistant U. S. Commissioner of Education.

KNOW YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY

By Nora E. Beust

Specialist in School Libraries

THE present and potential services of a well-selected and effectively administered school library unquestionably require consideration in the evaluation of the school of today. Even some of the early schoolmasters of America realized that it was necessary to provide books for reading as well as to teach the subject of reading. For example, G. Stanley Hall [1] wrote:

> A single text gives a narrow individual view of a subject at the best. In geography, e. g., a dozen or two books on the country studied are shown the pupils in school and circulated among them. They are perhaps stimulated to read a chapter of travels here, or a section on natural history or physical geography there, and report it in school . . . Thus pupils learn to handle books, how to taste and smell them, how to skip, to take time to select, and that half of education consists in learning where and how to get information.

As early as 1876, 19 States had laws of some kind designed to promote the development of public-school libraries. Most of the educators who were pioneers in the school library movement did not realize that books alone do not make a library. It must be remembered that library science was then still in its infancy. Today educators and librarians know that a dynamic reading center must have an abundance of carefully selected volumes which are organized and administered so that a wide range of library materials are readily available to pupils and teachers.

In an endeavor to be of assistance in the study of your school library, the following aspects of the subject are briefly presented with questions for study and discussion, and a list of references:

[1] Hall, G. Stanley. How to teach reading and what to read in school. Boston, Mass., D. C. Heath, 1886. p. 38.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

What are these functions?

The school library should act as a coordinating agency in furthering the objectives of the school by:

1. Providing books and other materials for study and investigation in connection with the curriculum, and
2. Making available books for free reading that will stimulate an appreciation for books of worth throughout life.

Is the library an independent agency?

The library is not an independent agency. It can fulfill its functions only if the superintendent, principal, teachers, students, and, of course, the librarian understand the purposes of the library, and work together to attain the desired ends.

What are the functions of the superintendent and his staff in the library program?

It is the superintendent's function to interpret the library to the board of education, to the community, and to the faculty, so that the library will be recognized as an integral part of the school. The principal should know the potentialities of the library and be able to help teachers visualize its possibilities in the work of the school. The teachers should be aware of the importance of the resources of the library as a part of the educational program. Students should be introduced to books and be made familiar with their use, so that they in turn may avail themselves of the library's holdings. The librarian has the responsibility of thoroughly informing herself on the school's program in order to organize and administer the library for its most efficient use in attaining the school's aims.

What is the librarian's part in building up the school library?

The specific professional duty of the librarian is to build and maintain a well-balanced book collection which satisfies and anticipates all of the reading needs of

students and teachers. This makes it imperative for her to have a broad concept of what those needs may be, by acquainting herself with:

1. The subjects and experiences that may be presented to children.
2. The general methods of teachers in making assignments and in conducting classes.
3. The time when various subjects, such as transportation, history of records, etc., may be studied by the various groups.
4. The number of students expected to use the materials.
5. Something of the interests, reading abilities, and environments of the students.

What types of materials are necessary in the school library?

With such a basic background of information, the librarian should be fortified to select wisely the various types of volumes and materials necessary for her clientele, namely:

1. Appropriate general reference books, such as encyclopedias, unabridged dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, biographical dictionaries, Government publications, etc., which may be secured by the school or which may be consulted or borrowed from a neighboring library.
2. Picture books and easy reading for schools which have elementary children.
3. Books on curricular subjects, such as transportation, conservation, safety education, art, English drama, etc.
4. Books in subject fields closely allied to the curriculum, such as aeronautics, photography, etiquette.
5. Books in fields of general interest to students, such as camping, fashions, television; and significant juvenile fiction.
6. Standard and classic books in good editions.
7. Books to read aloud and for storytelling.

8. Magazines which complement or supplement the book collection.
9. Visual and audio-visual aids of service to the program of the school.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Where do the children and youth in your community get their reading matter? What approximate percentage comes from the following?
   (*a*) Home or borrowed from other children.
   (*b*) School library.
   (*c*) Public library.
   (*d*) Book store.
   (*e*) Newsstand.
2. Make a list of the magazines that children and youth in your community read. Is there any difference between the type of magazines purchased from book store and newsstand, and the type made available in school and public library? Discuss the types if a variation exists. For example: Technical, hobbies, current events, literary, cheap pulp.
3. What are the favorite leisure-time activities of children and youth in your community? If reading is in the category, are the children and youth satisfied with what they have to read?
4. Is it customary for families to read aloud at home? What are some of the books chosen for reading aloud?
5. How important are books to children and young people in the school? Do children read books only when assigned, or do they go to the library with unassigned problems?

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PROMOTION OF THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

How may the effectiveness of the school library be motivated?

If the library is to fulfill the functions outlined, its resources must be made an indispensable part of the school for students and teachers.

How can the school library be made indispensable to teachers and students? Often the school librarian will have to work out for herself the details of fusing the library with the school, though there are some practices already being followed successfully in many schools which may suggest procedures for the particular school under consideration. The library is directed by the librarian with the advice and assistance of the school, for the school. To be concrete, the instructor of manual training should know that the librarian will call the information to his attention when news of important printed material in his subject field comes to the library through bibliographies, publishers' announcements, or other sources. Sometimes this is done by means of informal conferences or by conversation even less formal. There may be more formal group meetings of the members of a department in a large school, or even the entire faculty in a small school, where news of printed matter is called to the attention of the teaching staff. Again, the information may be sent through the school mail. Faculty bulletin boards provide another possibility.

When the material is actually bought and made ready for circulation, which should be, of course, as soon as

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possible after it has been decided that the book in question contains material of value to the school, the faculty members should be informed in the manner most desirable in the school. Some faculty members and students may like to see the new books on special display before they are circulated, or they may like to have the books kept in a new book section for a brief period, so that all can at least see what eventually they may read.

Brief notes describing these new books may be pasted in the books, posted on bulletin boards with book jackets, typed on catalog cards, or incorporated in scrapbooks.

Book talks are an ever popular means of book introduction. Librarians, faculty, students, or specialists may be asked to participate in various discussion groups on different subjects.

What should decide the location of books in the library?

After the books are assigned to a definite place in the classification scheme of the library, they should be found where they are the most useful to the school as a whole, for if the wishes of an individual faculty member or a department are followed without regard to the use of the book by other departments and the student body, the library cannot serve as the coordinating agency for the school's program. However, preferences of individual faculty members should always be considered if they can be satisfied without defeating the objectives of the library organization.

How should the librarian assist in curriculum planning?

The articulate school librarian suggests possible reading for new courses which are being planned in the school; suggests new material to be added to old courses or material to be dropped because of difficulty in style of presentation, or because for some other reason the material fails to meet the needs of the group.

Many schools find that the librarian's book knowledge is an indispensable part of the instructional program, in which case arrangements are made whereby the librarian may either be with a group in the classroom or the group

may come to the library when new units are being planned. The librarian's part in the school's instructional program extends to the individual child. For example, gifted children are given an opportunity to explore far beyond the subject matter presented for study in the class, through suggesting perhaps a life of Marie Curie, a book of travel in the Arctic, or a book on sculpture. On the other hand, children who have reading difficulties, or who have failed to find interest in reading, are introduced by the librarian to books which will arouse their curiosity and encourage them to read further.

In fact, the librarian should be charged to carry on an adequate reading guidance program for all students. Groups or individual children come to the librarian for material which they need for their school clubs. Librarians suggest books for community activities, such as little theater groups, garden clubs, pageants, etc. In addition to all this, the librarian is ever ready to be of help to parents who wish to purchase books for the children's home libraries, or who seek advice on what suitable material is available that their children might be reading, or what to read in the family.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of the librarian to establish good reading habits, an overcrowded library and insufficient staff prevent students from participating in the services which libraries should be in a position to offer.

How can the library be made indispensable?

Intelligent use of the library tends to make it indispensable to teachers and students. To attain this objective, library standards of the Southern Association of Secondary Schools require 12 lessons in the use of the library for schools accredited in the association. The number of lessons specified is of course the minimum number. In practice, formal lessons in the library are supplemented by individual instruction. Some schools have found that a greater use of the library results from teaching book and library use when students need the information, rather than from the formal teaching of techniques when there may be no immediate need for

them. To explain specifically, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* is introduced when a group needs to consult this index to find information on such subjects as Pulitzer prize winners, on travel in South America, and on recent archeological discoveries in the Southwest.

Does the accessibility of the library influence its use?

The procedures followed in admitting students to the library may be important factors in the library's use. The ideal situation provides for a library that is easily accessible to students and faculty. It is difficult to maintain a library which is readily available to all under the following circumstances:

1. When it is necessary to stagger attendance of students at classes.
2. When the library is too small in size.
3. When there is an inadequate number of librarians.
4. When the library is not considered in making the school's schedule.

How do centralized libraries facilitate the circulation of books?

Centralized libraries are generally conceded to give more adequate service to schools than individual classroom libraries with no central organization. For example, the subject of cotton is frequently referred to in more than one class. If there is a centralized collection, schedules for the use of the material can be planned. Such a book as Boutet de Monvel's *Joan of Arc* is used by children of a wide grade range. One copy of this book can serve many children. Effective centralized libraries provide for the loan of books to classrooms when it facilitates their use. Providing for the flexible circulation of books to classrooms is, then, another important factor in the best use of the library.

How may a desirable attitude be created?

An attitude of freedom for work should characterize the library. Children and teachers are encouraged to browse, to ask questions, and to read with both pleasure and profit if the library creates a desirable atmosphere. The basic determinants in the "library atmosphere" are

the philosophy of the school as reflected in the personality of the librarians, the type of library quarters, and the resources.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. If you were a student, do you think that you would choose to go to your school library—
   (*a*) To do assigned reading?
   (*b*) To get additional material for a school subject?
   (*c*) To get books for a hobby?
   (*d*) To get books to read for fun?
2. The bulletin board in the school library may stimulate reading.
   (*a*) Do students look at it, or is it accepted as part of the furniture?
   (*b*) Is there material about new books and authors of today?
   (*c*) Are there bibliographies which invite attention?
   (*d*) Are there merely required reading lists?
3. Are books news in your school? How did you reach your conclusion?
   (*a*) School paper.
   (*b*) Auditorium programs.
   (*c*) School clubs.
   (*d*) Other activities of young people.
4. Summarize the different means used by the librarian to make books useful to:
   (*a*) Students.
   (*b*) Teachers.

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ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

What are some of the forms of administrative control?

There are several forms of administrative control for school libraries which are now in operation in various communities.

1. There is the school library which is organized, administered, and financed solely by the local board of education.
2. There is the school library which is operated as a branch of a local, county, or regional library. In this second situation the school may provide only housing, and a library board may select books which will serve the older members of the community as well as the school clientele.
3. There is the school library which is planned and financed jointly by school and local library authorities. Such a library may be planned exclusively for school use, or it may serve both the school and the community.

What is meant by a trained librarian?

Wherever possible a fully trained librarian should be employed. This training presupposes a well-rounded college education, plus a year of professional library science education. The school librarian should come

to her position with an appreciation for the school's program. She must have a keen interest in children and teachers, and a desire to share a rich experience with books. If there is a school library supervisor the individual librarian's position is greatly strengthened. Like supervisors of other school departments, the school library supervisor increases the effectiveness of the work of the school library. This is accomplished through sympathetic guidance, stimulation, and coordination which is directed toward fulfilling the educational program of the city, county, or region.

Are budgets necessary for the school library?

Libraries need funds to purchase books and other materials. Generally accepted standards such as those of the C. C. Certain[1] report for elementary schools suggest an annual expenditure of $1 per pupil for books as the minimum for an adequate budget. At least three or four books per pupil should be provided with a program for additions and replacements. Some public schools spend more than $2 per pupil. In general, small schools of 500 or less need to spend more per capita for books than schools of 1,500 or more. Essential reference books which can be used by twice as many children in a large school are an example of expenditures which account for the larger amount needed by small schools.

If the money is to be used advantageously, expenditures must be carefully planned. For example, it is impossible to buy books wisely if the librarian cannot properly allocate the funds for the purchase of—

1. Replacements of worn-out books.
2. General reference books.
3. Books needed to fill gaps in various subject fields.
4. Important new books as they are published.

The librarian cannot buy printed materials to the best advantage if purchases are made only once or twice a year. The librarian, like the instructor, cannot predict interests and needs a half year in advance.

[1] Certain, C. C. The elementary school library defined in terms of book conservation and library service. *In* Wilson, Martha. School library experience. Wilson, 1925. p. 253–62. Reprinted from *Elementary School Journal* 24: 357, January 1924.

Is there a relationship between the location and appearance of the library and its use?

The location of the library influences its use. It should be as easily accessible to the children as possible. A cheerful room which seats approximately one-tenth of the school's enrollment, or large enough to seat the children of the room that has the greatest enrollment, is highly to be desired. Noiseless floor covering, adjustable shelving, circulation desk, tables, chairs, bulletin boards, display cases, dictionary and magazine stands are standard equipment. Many schools provide conference rooms for small groups. A librarian's office and workshop equipped with typewriter, cupboard, shelves, running water, and entrance to hall facilitate the technical preparation of books for library shelves.

It has been noted previously that the librarian, the library room, and its equipment influence the character of the work done in the library. A few easy chairs drawn up before an attractive shelf of books invite children to explore for themselves. Significant decorations are a constant source of pleasure. Serious consideration should be given to planning and equipping the room which houses the school's reading resources, because a room which satisfies the young people's aesthetic sense can do much in establishing the pleasurable reading habit.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What standards does the accrediting agency of your school prescribe for school libraries? Does your school just meet the standards, or are the standards looked upon as minimum requirements upon which to build a library which serves the school adequately?
2. Are librarians certified in your State? What are the requirements for the types of certificates issued? Are there changes that you would suggest?
3. What personal traits do you consider essential for the librarian? Why do you think these traits affect the work of the librarian?

4. Do you require the same high scholarship of the librarian that you require of the teachers in your school? If so, is she given the time to use her scholarship with students and teachers, or is she obliged to spend her time with mechanical details that could be cared for by non-professional personnel?
5. Is the school librarian an important member of your community? How has she succeeded in establishing this reputation for herself?
6. Do you know the school librarian by name? Do you ever consult her in regard to any reading done in your home?
7. Does the school library have a budget? Who supervises the expenditure of funds for books and equipment? Are funds available for books throughout the school year?

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COOPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

How is the effectiveness of the school library increased?

The school library becomes increasingly effective as it cooperates to take advantage of public library services to the school. Many public libraries provide spacious children's reading rooms filled with an abundance of excellent books in charge of librarians especially trained to guide children's reading. These children's librarians conduct story-hours, give book talks, have individual and group discussions, organize clubs, and in fact, exert all of their professional energy to bring books of worth pleasurably to the consideration of children.

Some children are public library patrons because their parents use the services available to those who seek books for the home. However, the school librarian wherever possible should take the children of the various classes to the public library, so that they may make the acquaintance of the children's librarian, ascertain the kind and the arrangement of materials suited to their needs, and discover how to make the best use of the library's resources.

What are some specialized services to youth?

More and more public libraries are recognizing the need for continuing specialized services to youth. Young people find librarians who are interested in their problems and who know the books which young people want to read. The school librarian who is aware of the services the public library gives the year round to all ages, can assist greatly in the use of more adequate library resources by the students of the school.

What types of cooperation have been practiced successfully?

The following are examples of the types of cooperation which are beneficial to the school and to the public library:

1. Discussion of procedures to follow on assigned reading and reference work which may be done at the public library.
2. Discussion of types of materials to be bought by the school and public library, respectively (especially as funds are usually limited).
3. Centralizing library book buying, cataloging, preparation of books, and binding.
4. Discussion of the problems of children and youth who need special reading guidance.
5. Instruction in the use of the public library.
6. Exchange of information regarding loans of books and visual and audio aids.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Does the school librarian know what resources there are in the public library for school children? What is being done by the school to make the best use of the public library?
2. What percentage of the children in the various grades have public library cards? How often do the children use their cards? What kind of books do they get from the library?
   (*a*) Supplementary school material.
   (*b*) Hobbies.
   (*c*) Recreational material.
3. Do the school and public library cooperate in the observance of Good Book Week? Does the program grow out of the everyday reading of the children, or is it in the nature of a book show for the week?
4. What do the school library and the public library do to acquaint parents and teachers with children's and young people's reading materials? Are there displays of new books? Are there talks about books? Is there a course of several lessons for adults on the subject of children's reading?

5. Do the school and public library cooperate to encourage children to build up their own personal book shelves?

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